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## SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

### **STATE OF CONNECTICUT** **One-Stop Profile**

December 1996

Based on a Site Visit Conducted During June 1996

# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## One-Stop Profile

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# **STATE OF CONNECTICUT**

## **One-Stop Profile**

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### **DESCRIPTION OF THE STATE CONTEXT**

Several economic shocks occurred in Connecticut during the period of the late 1980s and early 1990s. Widespread downsizing within the defense and insurance industries led to high levels of unemployment in the state. During the three years between 1989 and 1992, over 150,000 jobs were lost and unemployment doubled from 3.7% to 7.5%. In 1992, it was estimated that more than 75% of workers who had lost jobs were permanently laid off—the highest permanent job loss rate on record—and the proportion of unemployed who had not worked during the previous six months had reached the second highest level since the 1940s. Unemployment has, however, declined since 1992 to current levels of about 5%.

Partly in response to these rapid structural changes in the state's economy, a far-reaching examination of the state's workforce development system was undertaken. Surveys conducted among business and individual customers of the Connecticut Department of Labor at about this time revealed low levels of customer satisfaction with the system. Employers expressed their desire for more customized services that would meet their changing needs in a timely manner. Individual customers complained of "red tape," the fact that they often had to give the same information several times, and contact several DOL employees in order to access the services they required. At the policy level, weaknesses identified by other stakeholders included the existence of multiple and ineffective planning processes, a poor capacity for priority setting, and a lack of overall accountability for workforce development services.

In response to these criticisms, a number of initiatives were undertaken in Connecticut to integrate the planning and delivery of workforce development services (described below under Evolution of the State One-Stop Vision). Thus, prior to the receipt of the federal One-Stop Implementation Grant, much of the groundwork for increased coordination, co-location, and integration of DOL-funded workforce development services had already taken place, particularly for the programs operated by the Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL).

With the advent of the Connecticut's One-Stop initiative in 1995, nineteen existing Job Centers administered by CTDOL are being transformed into One-Stop Centers. These One-Stop Centers, which are known as *Connecticut Works* Centers, are intended to offer a full range of USDOL services through co-location and integration of services administered by the Connecticut Department of Labor (responsible for ES and UI), Regional Workforce Development Boards (responsible for JTPA and adult education) as well as services provided by other state and local partner agencies. By mid-1996, 7 of a total of 19 Job Centers had been certified as *Connecticut Works* Centers, and a remaining 12 were slated to be certified before the end of 1997, the third year of One-Stop implementation.

Several contextual variables have influenced One-Stop planning, design, and implementation in Connecticut. These include: (1) a history of providing One-Stop type services through "transition centers" for dislocated workers; (2) a strong commitment to the development of tools for performance measurement; and (3) an equally strong emphasis on developing staff capacity through training. These are briefly described below.

- *In 1994, the Connecticut Department of Labor and Regional Workforce Development Boards cooperated in establishing "transition centers" for dislocated workers at Job Centers throughout the state.* These centers created an early opportunity for a collaboration among local and state agencies in providing services to assist dislocated workers. The experiences gained with transition centers helped develop the interagency partnerships necessary to provide integrated career services to a universal population.
- *There has been a commitment to the development of outcome-based performance indicators for One-Stops.* Indicators that allow for a balanced picture of One-Stop Center performance have been developed by the state with substantial input from local management and staff. An emphasis has been placed on developing local understanding of the relevance of outcome measures in promoting continuous improvement of services.
- *Staff development has been a major priority of the One-Stop initiative in Connecticut.* Staff development and training occupy a central place in the state's One-Stop initiative. Capacity building is viewed as a strategic business tool for promoting behavioral change, organizational results, and continuous improvement.

## **EVOLUTION OF THE STATE ONE-STOP VISION**

The state design for a One-Stop system in Connecticut has emerged gradually over the last decade. A major step toward the integration of the state's workforce development efforts was taken in 1989, when the Connecticut legislature established the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC), whose mandate was to plan for the

coordination of existing employment and training programs. In its first “Human Resource Development Plan,” produced in 1990, the Commission identified over 60 workforce development programs administered by 15 state agencies.

By 1991, CETC had developed a strategy for coordinating the fragmented array of employment and training and placement programs in the state. The Commission recommended that this be accomplished through the formation of regional workforce development boards representing the interests of business, government, labor, education, and the community. In cooperation with the governor and state agencies, these boards were to determine priorities for a wide array of employment, training, and placement programs and coordinate the delivery of services to address those priorities. CETC promoted a vision of a workforce development system capable of building a “fully productive workforce, educated and trained to compete in the global marketplace.”

In an early report, CETC identified five major human resource investment goals for the state’s workforce system. These were

- To create and support an integrated, accountable, and universal workforce development system;
- To support a system of lifelong learning oriented to producing a resilient workforce with the qualities and skills needed to succeed during periods of economic, social, organizational, and structural change;
- To promote workforce skills and values that support the career aspirations and competencies suitable to a changing economic environment;
- To promote social and cultural attitudes and values that support the interdependence of work and family life necessary to achieve general well-being; and
- To promote a coordinated planning and policy structure to strengthen interagency, state and local, and public and private cohesiveness in planning and administering workforce development initiatives.

Based partly on this input, a major reorganization of the Connecticut Department of Labor was undertaken in 1991. Reorganization had as its five major goals: (1) improving the quality of services to customers; (2) reducing in the number of “hand-offs” of customers among staff; (3) decentralizing authority and decision-making; (4) providing for improved customer service support; and (5) developing CTDOL into a “model” agency and employer. As part of this reorganization, front-line staff in Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Employment Services (ES), which were already co-located, were cross-trained so that individual customers could receive both of these services at the same time. Services to

employers were decentralized with the creation of Business Services Units within each of nine regions. These regional Business Service Units began to offer more localized services to employers such as customized job training, trade adjustment assistance, and apprenticeship programs. In addition, CTDOL's hierarchy was substantially flattened, and the structure of decision-making authority was decentralized.

In 1992, the Connecticut legislature approved a plan developed by CETC to establish nine Regional Workforce Development Boards. The Commission envisioned a regional system that would expand on the existing system of Private Industry Councils (PICs) operating under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). In 1993, the role of the Regional Boards was expanded to include the administration of "coordinated education and training opportunities" funds transferred from the State Department of Education. As described below, Regional Workforce Development Boards have emerged as policy and oversight bodies for the emerging system of *Connecticut Works* Centers, in partnership with the Connecticut Department of Labor.

In 1994, the Connecticut Department of Labor and Regional Workforce Development Boards cooperated in establishing Transition Centers for dislocated workers at Job Centers throughout the state. These pilot centers, modeled after earlier efforts by PICs in the 1980s, created an opportunity for collaboration among CTDOL, Regional Boards, and other local and state agencies, and were focused on providing services to individuals and businesses affected by downsizing and layoffs. Transition Centers provided individual customers access to professional support from trained staff, often in a group setting. Customers of Transition Centers also had free use of telephones and faxes for local and long-distance calls, copy machines, assistance in writing and printing cover letters and resumes, free mailing, and access to a reference library that included books, newspapers, and other written reference materials. Although originally conceived as a response to assist dislocated workers, Transition Centers eventually served as an important bridge toward providing integrated career services to a universal population.

In the spring of 1994, the Connecticut legislature passed Public Act 94-116, which provides formal legislative authority for implementing a statewide system of Job Centers focused on the delivery of workforce development services to the general public.<sup>1</sup> The Act calls for the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission to set overall policy for

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<sup>1</sup>The same legislation established the framework for a statewide school-to-work system.

the Job Center system. Administrative oversight of the Job Center system is to be shared between the Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) and Regional Workforce Development Boards (RWDBs). The legislation also calls for these entities to consult with the Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development to ensure coordination of services with employers and to collaborate with other public and private education, human services, and employment and training providers to deliver coordinated services to individuals.

As part of the One-Stop initiative, Connecticut's existing Job Centers are being transformed into One-Stop centers through the involvement of additional state and local agency partners and development of the capacity to provide integrated services to job seekers and business customers, with an emphasis on the use of self-access services. As described in its application for a federal One-Stop Implementation Grant, Connecticut's initial schedule for the "roll out" of *Connecticut Works* Centers was very ambitious. The state's goal was to open fourteen out of nineteen planned One-Stop centers during the first year of implementation in 1995. In actuality, only two centers were opened during this formative year. At the time of the site visit in June 1996, seven *Connecticut Works* Centers had opened; the remaining twelve centers were scheduled to be certified as One-Stop centers in 1997.

## **ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE STATE ONE-STOP INITIATIVE**

### **State-Level Organization and Governance**

The Connecticut Employment and Training Commission was intended to be the state's major policy body for issues of workforce development. In addition to CETC's mandate to produce a coordinated workforce development plan, it was designed to provide a forum for communication and regular exchange of information among state agency partners. Since the election of a new governor in 1994, however, the process of making new appointments to CETC has been slow. Although nominations for the new commission have been made, nominees have not yet been approved, and former CETC members have convened only twice since 1994.

An inter-agency "Statewide Planning Committee" for One-Stop has assumed the lead in implementing the state's workforce policy. This committee is co-chaired by CTDOL's Deputy Commissioner for Employment and Training and the Director of New Haven's Regional Workforce Development Board (RWDB) and includes representatives from four other state partner agencies — the Department of Social Services (which includes the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services), the State Department of Education, the Department of

Higher Education, and the Department of Economic and Community Development. Although originally established as one of nine functional committees under the state's One-Stop initiative (see "Communication and Coordination" below), since mid-1994, the Statewide Planning Committee has become the executive committee for One-Stop implementation in Connecticut.

Under the federal and state One-Stop initiative, interagency coordination has begun to bear fruit, and a number of formal agreements have been reached with state agency partners, although the agencies responsible for the mandated DOL-funded programs—CTDOL and Regional Workforce Development Boards—remain the lead actors within Job Centers, renamed *Connecticut Works* Centers under the One-Stop initiative. The state has identified a total of four additional state agencies as core partners in One-Stop planning and administration. Thus, a total of five state agencies, in addition to the network of nine Regional Workforce Development Boards, are the major actors in state One-Stop planning and implementation.

- *The Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL)* is responsible for the delivery of UI and ES services through *Connecticut Works* Centers and business services through nine Business Services Units throughout the state.
- *The Regional Workforce Development Boards (RWDBs)* are responsible for overseeing the delivery of services using JTPA and adult education funds in nine service delivery areas.
- *The Department of Social Services (DSS)* including the *Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS)* administers financial assistance and social services to low-income persons and families and vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with physical and mental disabilities. Although good working relationships have been established between *Connecticut Works* Centers and DSS offices in some local areas, in other local areas DSS has developed its own delivery system for employment-related services to DSS clients.
- *The State Department of Education* is involved in plans for using One-Stop centers to provide job development services to youth involved in School-to-Work programs, educational needs assessments, and career decision-making workshops for youth. Under the One-Stop implementation grant, SDE has received funding to train One-Stop staff on adult basic education, the integration of school-to-career services into One-Stop centers, and the use of occupational information databases.
- *The Department of Higher Education* is involved in plans to provide educational counseling, as well as occupational, technical, and career education to One-Stop customers and customized or short-term courses to



workers or employers; this agency also operates an education and employment information center hotline available to One-Stop customers.

- *The Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD)* participates in the development of business services and case management for CTDOL Business Services, operates the Connecticut Economic Information System, and helps to market One-Stop services to employers. DECD plans to outstation three or four staff members in each of the nine CTDOL Business Services Units around the state to ensure seamless services to businesses.

The state has also developed One-Stop partnerships with the State Library system, which has resulted in the establishment of “mini-career centers” in libraries, linked libraries to the *Connecticut Works* home page and electronic network, and enabled One-Stop centers to draw on the information and support services available to state residents through the library system. An emerging linkage with the state Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) has led to plans to establish DMV licensing, identification, and automobile registration services at One-Stop centers and install *Connecticut Works* job kiosks at DMV offices.

### **State Framework for Local Governance**

The state provides for two levels of local governance—policy oversight and guidance at the level of “Workforce Development Regions” and day-to-day management at the level of the *Connecticut Works* Centers. Although the funds actually administered by the Regional Boards are still somewhat narrowly focused—including JTPA and basic education preparation for individuals interested in further education or training—the Boards have a broad policy mandate to assess human resource development needs in their respective regions, plan for regional employment and training programs, oversee workforce programs and services, and coordinate a broad range of employment, education, training, and related services. Regional Workforce Development Boards are responsible for approving the annual service plans prepared by each *Connecticut Works* Center in their region.

*Connecticut Works* Centers are governed by local “Management Committees” co-chaired by the local director for the ES/UI programs (a CTDOL employee)<sup>2</sup> and the staff

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<sup>2</sup> CTDOL “Basic Services Staff” (UI/ES), had already been co-located in local Job Centers for many years, usually with two CTDOL managers working side by side. The state, faced with diminishing Wagner-Peyser funding has reduced the number of management staff at Centers by creating a single integrated ES/UI management position—Job Center Director. UI/ES functions were integrated and line staff was cross-trained.

director of the Regional Workforce Development Board. When local Management Committees are initiated at the start-up of a Center, the ES/UI and RWDB directors jointly appoint the additional Management Committee members. Subsequent appointments are made by the Committee as a whole. Local Management Committee members may represent only public or non-profit entities that have training, education, or, employment as part of their mission. These entities must also be willing to contribute financial or non-financial resources to the Center.

Local Management Committees are responsible for developing an annual service plan that is approved by the RWDB Chair and the appropriate Chief Elected Official and forwarded to the Connecticut Department of Labor and the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission for approval. Management Committees, in turn, are charged with selecting a Center Director responsible for day-to-day Center operations.<sup>3</sup> Currently, in all *Connecticut Works* Centers, the UI/ES director holds the position of *Connecticut Works* Director.

## **COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION**

Communication and coordination among One-Stop agency partners at the state and local levels occur through the state's *Connecticut Works* Office, which is housed at CTDOL's headquarters in Wethersfield. The three full-time staff persons of the *Connecticut Works* office act as "brokering agents" for the One-Stop system as a whole, helping to coordinate and define partner relationship building with other state agencies, as well as within the various units and departments within CTDOL. *Connecticut Works* staff also foster productive communication among the various state and local partners and "shepherd" planned One-Stops through the process leading to certification by expediting project work plans. The *Connecticut Works* Office coordinates inter-agency meetings and schedules bi-weekly "resource team" meetings within CTDOL. At these meetings, information technology, business management, and operations staff discuss issues related to One-Stop implementation including facilities planning, marketing, budgeting, staff development, and performance measurement for planned and operational *Connecticut Works* Center.

The *Connecticut Works* Office arranges and staffs quarterly local Management Team meetings of Job Center and Workforce Development Board directors. These meetings

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<sup>3</sup>Center Directors must be from the public or private non-profit sectors.

provide the major avenue for face-to-face communication among state and regional staff. These meetings are attended by eighteen Job Center directors<sup>4</sup> and nine Regional Workforce Development Board directors, and provide an opportunity for peer networking. They allow directors to take stock of local developments, compare notes on problems and achievements related to One-Stop implementation, and alert the One-Stop office of any potential problems related to One-Stop roll-out.

The *Connecticut Works* Office also coordinates the activities of nine functional committees established during the period of One-Stop planning and early implementation. The Statewide Planning Committee has already been described. Other committees and their respective roles are described below.

- *The Performance Measures Committee* has guided the development of a comprehensive system for measuring performance of the *Connecticut Works* system and its component programs, including preparation of customer satisfaction surveys and quarterly “report cards” on statewide and local Center performance.
- *The Marketing Committee* oversees the development and execution of plans for marketing the *Connecticut Works* system statewide and provides local areas with marketing support.
- *The Labor Market Information Committee* facilitates the design, development, and implementation of LMI services to support the mission of the *Connecticut Works* system.
- *The Capacity Building Committee* oversees the development and implementation of activities to meet the on-going capacity building needs of *Connecticut Works* Centers.
- *The Facilities Committee* oversees standards for facility design and plans the development and implementation of the facilities housing the *Connecticut Works* Centers.
- *The Employer Services Committee* develops the plan for business services and ensures integration of business plans with other key players such as the Department of Community and Economic Development.
- *The Local Planning Committee* establishes procedures and guidelines for local planning and develops templates for funding and certification of *Connecticut Works* Centers.

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<sup>4</sup> There are 19 Job Centers of which 7 have been certified as *Connecticut Works* One-Stops. One of the Job Center directors manages two Job Centers.

## **DESIGN OF THE STATE ONE-STOP INITIATIVE**

### **Description of the State One-Stop Design**

Through its Local Planning Committee, Connecticut has established guidelines for the development of local One-Stop centers, referred to as *Connecticut Works Centers*. Before individual Job Centers can be certified as *Connecticut Works Centers*, they must meet state requirements for the delivery of core services to individuals and employers.

*Core Services for Individuals.* The state has defined five “core services” that must be available to individuals at One-Stop centers. These are described below.

- *Job Services* including: (1) initial intake and review of work and educational history; (2) provision of information on careers and the labor market, job availability, and the quality of education and training programs; (3) preliminary skills, interest, and aptitude assessment; (4) career exploration; (5) job search assistance including self-directed resume preparation; (6) referrals to jobs, training, community services, and placement services; and (7) profiling, counseling, and workshops for UI recipients likely to have difficulty finding new jobs.
- *Veterans Employment Services Programs.*
- *Unemployment Insurance* services including initial claims filing; adjudication and appeals, and continuing claims, which are scheduled to be handled through voice response.
- *Career Services*, formerly known as Transition Center Services, including access to resource information, computers, telephones, printers, and copiers for job seekers.
- *JTPA Services.* Title II-A services include outreach, intake, assessment, eligibility determination, counseling, service plan preparation, referrals to training, pre-employment workshops; and job placement. Title III services include retraining and assistance with finding employment.
- *Trade Adjustment Assistance* including counseling, testing, and training.

Universal services, available to all customers at *Connecticut Works Centers*, must include the Job Bank, Talent Bank, labor market information, inventories of training and education opportunities, and other information related to job search available through Center resource libraries. Services available to all customers who complete the Employment Services “short-form” registration include additional job search support services, such as free access to telephones, fax, and word processors.

Centers must also provide orientations to all customers interested in registering for Job Services and Unemployment Insurance. At these orientations, customers are informed

about all the services available through the Center, including services available to the general public and services reserved for persons enrolled in eligibility-based programs, such as JTPA. Among the services generally available to the general public are workshops offered by ES/UI and partner staff, including modules on pre-employment skills, vocational exploration, job search skills, and other specialized topics. Although case management services (including counseling, educational counseling, working with customers to develop service plans or “personal development plans,” and referral to supportive services, placement, and relocation) are generally targeted to persons enrolled in eligibility-based programs, such services can be provided to individuals not enrolled in categorical programs on request.

Although they are not mandated to do so by the *Connecticut Works* certification process, local Centers are encouraged to co-locate and/or develop referral networks with a wide range of non-DOL partner agencies and service providers. Services that may be provided by these agencies through the One-Stop system are listed below.

- *Department of Social Service.* Support services that may be accessed on-site or through referrals include housing and financial assistance, medical care, substance abuse treatment, child care, food, clothing, emergency shelter, and transportation. The Bureau of Rehabilitation Services can also assist persons with physical or mental disabilities to prepare for, find, or keep a job.
- *Department of Motor Vehicles.* The DMV currently has a desk in at least one One-Stop office where customers can obtain an identification card and renew driver’s licenses and vehicle registration. Kiosks that will provide access to job listings and career services are also being planned for installation in a number of DMV offices.
- *State Library.* A unique partnership has been developed with the library system to provide training, materials, and computer infrastructure support to a number of reference libraries throughout the state. The goal is to use the library system as a point of contact for students, job seekers, and employers looking for up-to-date information on the labor market, career and training opportunities, and job availability.
- *Department of Higher Education* currently provides access to its toll-free information hotline on education and career opportunities as well as electronic access to listings of accredited study programs offered by colleges and occupational schools throughout the state. The department also funds Technical Assistance Centers at state universities and a Business Services Network at community technical colleges. State universities also provide specialized services to employers seeking assistance to upgrade the skills of their workforce, and community-technical colleges offer a variety of

occupational, technical, and career education for immediate employment and job retraining, in addition to customized training for employers and job seekers.

- *Department of Education* currently provides a number of services to job seekers including those with substantial barriers to employment. Services include career decision-making workshops, bilingual vocational-technical programs, educational needs assessment, and career counseling. This department is also an important partner in the state's School-to-Career initiative.

*Core Services for Employers.* Reforming services to employers is a major priority of the present CTDOL Commissioner, who comes from a background in private business. Services are provided to business customers through Business Services staff in One-Stop centers. Business Services, provided by staff from both CTDOL and RWDB, are overseen by nine "Business Services Units"—one in each RWDB region. Business Service staff also cooperate with the Department of Economic and Community Development, which offers businesses assistance with project management, financing, site search and remediation, economic and demographic research, marketing, and business registration. Although a formal agreement with DECD has not yet been reached at the time of the site visit, it was expected that by the end of 1996, three to four DECD employees would be stationed in Business Services Units in each of four *Connecticut Works Centers*.

Basic services that must be available to employers at *Connecticut Works Centers* are described below:

- *Labor Exchange and Recruitment* services must include listing job openings; maintaining Job Bank listings; providing job matching, job development, recruiting, and applicant screening services for full-time or part-time jobs; and conducting follow-ups on applicants referred to or placed in jobs.
- *Workplace Consultation* services provided by Business Service Units are designed to assist employers seeking to attain or maintain competitiveness. Consultations can help businesses identify training and employment needs, cope with changes in the workforce, and understand issues related to quality, employee performance, and labor and UI laws and regulations.
- *Workforce Development Services* include tax credit programs for employers seeking to hire individuals from targeted populations; customized job training for employers in high technology and other growth industries; manufacturing and technology assistance for employers; and apprenticeship training programs;
- *Downsizing Support* must be available to employers and employees before and during company downsizings. These services can include assistance

from the state dislocated worker unit and rapid response teams in providing on-site services to address the needs of employers experiencing major layoffs and their workers.

## **Relevance of the State Design to the Four Federal Goals**

### **Universal Access**

*Connecticut Works* offices are envisioned as places that will provide flexible and continuously available workforce development opportunities to all state residents regardless of age and prior work experience. According to the state's vision for One-Stops, customers should be able to enter the workforce development system "through any door" and "at any time" during a process of life-long learning. Equally important, *Connecticut Works* Centers are intended to shift the focus of workforce services from "job search" toward "career planning."

Funding for universal services remains a concern for local Centers. Most have dealt with increased customer flow through increased use of self-directed and group services. State respondents admit that there are challenges involved in paying for the types of services they envision for universal customers, and that the question of finding a correct mix of funding sources to pay for these services will continue to be an on-going challenge.

The state currently requires customers to register for Employment Services in order to access job support services, career assistance, and workshops provided at One-Stop centers. Because this is done primarily for reasons of tracking, state and local respondents do not view this to be a major impediment to universal access, although alternatives that would still allow for customer tracking are also being considered.

### **Customer Choice**

Connecticut seeks to further the goal of customer choice by empowering customers to choose services appropriate to their needs and by developing services that are appealing and user-friendly. Centers are encouraged to reduce the amount of "red tape" involved in accessing workforce services, to provide information for customers with special needs, and to adapt the hours of services at Centers to the needs of customers.

*Connecticut Works* Centers are expected to provide a full menu of service options to customers and to orient customers to the available services and different modes of accessing services. Whereas in the "traditional" workforce service delivery system there was usually a single entry point into the system, under the vision guiding the *Connecticut Works* system, customers will be able to enter the service delivery system at a number of different points,

including automated voice-response systems and computer modem links. As an example, customers who now must come in person to a Job Center, will soon be able to enroll for unemployment benefits by telephone to a regional center. Continuing UI claims are already processed using telephone voice response.

In addition to services which will be available at the 19 planned *Connecticut Works* Centers, the state is also in the process of establishing a number of partnerships with state agencies that will allow for first contact with the Workforce Center system by customers at a variety of locations such as kiosks in Department of Motor Vehicles offices and “mini-Career Centers” within local libraries and schools.

### **Integrated Services**

The immediate focus of many local integration efforts has revolved around defining coordinated and integrated roles for CTDOL and RWDB staff within One-Stop centers. The state envisions that integrated services will eventually include business, labor, economic development, education, employment and training, and human services. The achievement of integrated services is viewed as a continuous process of incorporating additional services and service providers into the *Connecticut Works* system. In several local sites, for example, One-Stop Centers already work closely with local DSS staff in providing welfare-to-work services. In addition, a renewed emphasis in some sites has been placed on incorporating career-to-work initiatives into the *Connecticut Works* local system. The recent decision to integrate and co-locate DECD business services units with CTDOL and DECD staff at four One-Stops represents a major step in the direction of providing integrated services to businesses.

In addition to providing convenient access to a wide range of employment and training services, the state also intends for One-Stops to act as a gateway to a variety of supplemental and support services. According to the state’s vision, services and programs are to be made seamless from the customer’s perspective. Customers should not feel that they are being “shuffled from one service to another.”

State planners have created a matrix that defines minimum levels of integration for certification as a One-Stop Center. Existing and planned *Connecticut Works* Centers must not only submit information on the services to be provided at the Center but also must describe their approach to integrating services and programs. Although the state has not mandated a system of integrated intake for individual customers, several *Connecticut Works* Centers have developed common intake forms and systems.



### **Performance-Driven/Outcome Based**

One of the goals of the state Performance Measurement Committee is that a standardized set of core measures should be utilized across all *Connecticut Works* offices in assessing One-Stop performance. These measures should have value to those working in the field, provide staff with basis for comparing outcomes with other offices in the state, and give staff performance feedback that will enable them to identify needed changes. The state views capacity building as a required element of a system that links performance management to continuous improvement. As a part of capacity building efforts, the state plans for staff in local offices to receive training in total quality management (TQM) and the analytical techniques that will allow them to design local performance measures to supplement those mandated by the state.

To promote these goals, CTDOL established a “Performance Measurement Unit” (PMU), which has been mandated to develop a core set of performance measures for *Connecticut Works* One-Stop Centers. Staff from this unit have worked with local area staff to ensure that local managers and staff understand the relevance of the materials and can use performance measures in a way that supports continuous improvement efforts. PMU staff, with input from state and local managers, developed a set of measures intended to gauge Center performance. Local staff participation in the process of choosing measures was seen as particularly important, since the state does not want Centers to feel that measures were “imposed” on them from the outside.

PMU staff developed a system of measures that is intended to provide a balanced picture of Center performance. Quarterly Reports, prepared for each Job Center and for the state as a whole, present this information in an easily understood way. The performance measures currently used include nine process measures, four context measures, and one workload measure. Outcome measures include:

- *Applicant/Claimant Satisfaction*, represented by an index of overall customer satisfaction;
- *Entered Employment*, measured as the percentage of registered job applicants who entered employment;
- *Job Bank Effectiveness*, measured as the percentage of purged job orders with at least one placement;
- *Employer Satisfaction*, represented by an index of overall employer satisfaction (this index was under development at the time of the evaluation visit);

Process measures include:

- *Wait Time*, measured as the percentage of individuals who indicated that their wait was too long; and by the average time of wait;
- *Promptness of Unemployment Insurance*, measured as the percentage of non-monetary decisions made on time; and the percentage of payments made within 21 days;
- *Employability Services*, measured as the percentage of Employment Service registrants receiving employability or other services; the percentage receiving group services; the percentage of newly-registered applicants undergoing assessment; and the percentage of registrants receiving a service within 30 days of assessment;
- *Referral and Placement*, measured as the percentage of registered applicants receiving at least one referral;
- *Voice Response*, measured as the percentage of calls transferred to staff that were unanswered on the third ring.

Context measures include:

- *Employment Services*, measured as the percentage of new job applicants who were fully registered;
- *Referral and Placement*, measured as the proportion of individuals referred to jobs to individuals placed; and the percentage of placements initiated from microfiche or kiosk;
- *Job Bank Effectiveness*, measured as the average number of referrals per purged job opening;
- *Voice Response*, measured as the percentage of continued UI claims processed by voice response.

The workload measure is:

- *UI Claims*, measured as the number of UI claims per full-time equivalent position.

#### **FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS, BUDGETING, AND FISCAL ISSUES**

The state of Connecticut received \$7 million in combined funding for 1995 and 1996. Of this total, \$5.9 million was for first- and second-year One-Stop implementation and \$1.1 million was for improvements to its labor market information system (received as a separate grant during the first implementation year).

Of the available One-Stop implementation funds, \$2.9 million was allocated to the nine workforce development regions. Most of these regional funds—\$2.4 million—were

allocated among the nine Regional Workforce Development Boards; the remainder was allocated to CTDOL regional offices.<sup>5</sup> The amount of money received by each region was negotiated, based on the region's demonstrable needs for (1) equipment and personnel to develop the capacity to provide self-service opportunities for One-Stop customers; and (2) other changes needed to transition to a One-Stop system, such as office redesign. Although grants to cover personnel costs were allowed, only those costs directly related to new functions brought about by the transition to One-Stop were approved. In some cases, for example, regions used One-Stop implementation funding to cover the cost of center "greeters" and or other staff needed to prepare for the transition to self-access services.

A total of \$2.1 million in first and second year funding (the \$1.1 million first-year LMI grant, plus another \$1 million of One-Stop funding) has been allocated to upgrade information technology systems. These funds have covered the costs of installing automated labor market and occupational information on the state's public access network, installing and piloting the Talent Bank, developing a *Connecticut Works* Web site, providing links to the Connecticut Job Bank through the Internet, and purchasing and installing kiosks to provide access to statewide workforce development data. All of these systems were either being piloted or were fully operational at the time of the evaluation site visit.

Additional One-Stop funds retained at the state level have been allocated to executive and business costs (\$630,000), staff development (\$400,000), developing and implementing performance measures (\$230,000), and marketing activities (\$170,000).

State-level One-Stop funds have also been used to develop "incentive contracts" with each of the additional key state agency partners to increase their involvement in the One-Stop initiative. A contract for \$90,000 with the State Department of Education (SDE) is being used to support SDE personnel who are conducting training workshops for local One-Stop staff on subjects such as adult basic education and integrating school-to-work initiatives into One-Stops. As part of this contract, SDE is also assisting CTDOL in developing occupational information databases and training staff in their use. Another contract of \$130,000 was signed with the Department of Higher Education, which is providing educational and career information counseling to One-Stop customers via its toll-free hotline and conducting on-site educational counseling workshops at One-Stop centers.

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<sup>5</sup> All figures are rounded.

At the time of the site visit, a contract was also being negotiated with the Department of Community and Economic Development to cover costs associated with the co-location of three to four DECD staff persons in each of four One-Stop locations. At the time of the evaluation site visit, an agreement had not yet been reached for providing incentive funds to the Department of Social Services.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE SUPPORT MECHANISMS**

### **Capacity Building and Technical Assistance**

With the reorganization of CTDOL in 1991, came a shift in values that identified the need to create an organization centered around “life-long learning.” Drawing from the examples of successful private companies that had made large investments in capacity building—such as Federal Express, Xerox, and GTE—CTDOL planners recognized that they could not be successful in achieving their goals without a strong commitment to capacity building. Since 1991, staff development and training have come to occupy a central place in overall organizational decisions and in the development of local One-Stop centers.

CTDOL’s Staff Development Unit (SDU) is comprised of eight full-time staff persons. According to SDU staff, it is important to avoid training that is perceived as something “done *to* people.” Instead, capacity building should be rooted in a strategic planning process and should encourage staff to become familiar with and committed to long-term agency objectives. Moreover, capacity building efforts should not be viewed as discrete *training events*, but as ongoing initiatives, with training sessions followed by *post-training* at the local level. For this reason, SDU staff define their jobs not only as trainers, but as “performance consultants” to local areas.

At the time of the site visit, SDU staff had held three rounds of training on customer service in each of the regions. Staff from each of the 19 Job Centers in the state (including both CTDOL staff and staff from other agency partners) had undergone training in three “basic skills” modules focused on quality customer service. Training sessions were designed to (1) improve telephone service for customers; (2) enhance basic communication skills and encourage active listening and problem solving on the part of staff; and (3) develop skills in customer services specifically related to One-Stops.

Most current and prospective One-Stop staff in the state have also received SDU training sessions designed to provide an orientation to the *Connecticut Works* system and support inter-agency team building and cross-training. Teams of partner agencies from

local offices are encouraged to work together in these sessions. Staff are presented with a variety of scenarios on dealing with customers and use role-playing techniques to practice responding to questions and requests for service and information. In addition to direct training, SDU has also developed “train the trainers” sessions and encouraged networks of peer-led training sessions and the involvement of field staff in peer-to-peer training programs. SDU hopes to encourage creativity in local offices and teach local staff to adopt the best practices used elsewhere in the state and the country.

Capacity building and staff development approaches have been closely coordinated with One-Stop system building efforts in the areas of (1) performance measurement, (2) staff support of labor market information and job search services, and (3) marketing efforts. Beginning in early 1996, the Staff Development Unit initiated a partnership with the Performance Measurement Unit to develop training on the analysis of performance measures contained in Job Center Quarterly Reports and target areas in which capacity building could support continuous improvement efforts.

SDU is collaborating with the information technology staff to develop technology curriculum units for supervisors and local staff. Although substantial investments in technology have been made and reporting systems are adequate, the largest challenge is training staff in the use of technology. According to one key respondent, “A lot of people have taught themselves at home, but we still have to cope with the problem of staff computer illiteracy. Many of the PC’s on staff desks, for example, are only used to plug into the UI files. We want to accelerate the development of staff, but a lot of people are comfortable with the things they grew up with.” Internet training began in mid-1996, to coincide with the development of an Internet Web site. Front-line staff dealing with customers were trained in the use of Netscape and the use of the Internet as a tool for the job search. Additional software training is planned for all *Connecticut Works* staff.

To support the delivery of high quality job search support services, SDU has also developed training modules based on the National Association of Resume Writers standards, and has certified approximately 30 staff from all 19 Job Centers as resume writers. Resume training was seen as particularly timely, since new skills are required of resume writers with the advent of new technologies such as Talent Banks in which job seekers can post their resumes electronically.

In coordination with the Performance Measures Committee, the Capacity Building Committee has conducted a “leadership survey” to determine the quality of staff

supervisory skills. Front-line staff were asked to rate their supervisors on a variety of key leadership qualities. Supervisors also completed a self-assessment of their level of comfort with particular tasks; managers were also asked to assess the skills of supervisors. The results of the survey were used to assess the need for training to strengthen supervisory and management skills. As a result of this assessment, leadership training for supervisor and management staff is planned. This training will cover change management and managing priorities, as well as the development of skills in communications, inter-personal relations, computers, and financial management.

Because Connecticut has a strong tradition of unionization, the state has had to address union issues that have arisen as a result of efforts to promote cross-training and redefine the job responsibilities of direct service staff in One-Stop centers. To address these issues, a cross-training committee has been formed in CTDOL. This 16-person committee, chaired by the director of Staff Development, is comprised of an equal number of union and management representatives. This committee holds on-going bi-monthly meetings which are intended (1) to keep union members informed of developments which are occurring as a result of CTDOL reorganization and the One-Stop initiative; and (2) address potential concerns of unions regarding such issues as salaries, job classification issues, and potential conflicts regarding job performance and job security issues associated with One-Stops.

### **Labor Market Information and Related Information Technology Improvements**

Under Connecticut's One-Stop implementation plan, providing readily accessible and easily understandable labor market information is a critical step in the move toward greater reliance on self-services. The overarching goal of Connecticut's LMI planners is to provide customers with a complete set of labor market information accessible at one convenient location. For job seekers, this means easier access to information to support all phases of the decision-making process from assessment of abilities and needs through the identification of potential employment opportunities. To help employers make informed decisions on starting new businesses or expanding existing operations, accurate information is needed that “packages” economic and workforce-related data on the skills of the existing workforce and availability of prospective employees.

The need to provide quality information to greater numbers of people has occurred at the same time that public workforce development resources have diminished. By sharing information that allows customers to make decisions on their own, valuable services can be

provided at lower per unit costs. To the extent that customers can take advantage of self-services, this frees staff to devote more attention to people who need more intensive services. According to one key respondent:

Tailoring the system to the needs of users is critical. The greatest gift that we can offer people is the ability to stretch their own growth in new directions. We need to think of ourselves as catalysts in this process—to be in the right place at the right time. This depends on our ability not only to gather reliable information, but to break it into the right pieces responsive to customer needs.

In its early LMI planning for One-Stops, the state set as a key objective the development of a strong information infrastructure based on integrated automated networks. Among the state's priority information system goals are the establishment of the following:

- A statewide information network accessible from the Internet;
- Remote access by customers to services and information;
- Public access to labor exchange systems;
- Access by all partners within the system to network information and services; and
- Comprehensive automated systems for employer services.

All of these goals have been substantially met. CTDOL has established an Internet home page on the World Wide Web with links to *Connecticut Works* pages that provide (1) a description of the purpose of the Centers and directions to each Center; (2) employment services with information and tips on searching for work and access to the state and national Job Banks; (3) information on unemployment compensation and the appeals process; (4) business services including self-service electronic job posting, information on programs for businesses and on finding suitable employees; (5) labor market information for job seekers, businesses, economists, and planners; and (6) America's Talent Bank, a nation-wide pool of resumes. The Talent Bank allows job-seekers to input information on their educational and career backgrounds and automatically generate a resume which can be used in hard copy and electronic form.

According to LMI respondents, a phenomenal amount of information has been available for years, but the major challenge of labor market information development has been accessibility — making it possible for people to “digest” the information that is available. Labor market information has not typically been understood by a wide audience, and Connecticut LMI developers are concerned with finding new ways of making existing information easier to use. The recent development of an Internet site is an important step

in the direction of providing “snapshots” of information in a format that can be quickly understood. More information is provided in a visual format. In the near future, labor market planners hope to develop geographic mapping for LMI. By pointing and clicking on a map of the state, users could get a variety of sub-state information including local unemployment rates, the range of occupations in particular regions, street maps and mass transportation routes, day care and other services providers in local areas. Users could identify areas by region, town, and potentially by zip code area.

### **Management Information Systems (MIS)**

At the time of the site visit there had been little progress in the integration of automated client-level information sharing among agencies at the state level. Individual reporting requirements have not changed with the adoption of One-Stop in Connecticut. The existing mainframe-based systems used for the UI and Wagner-Peyser programs do not communicate with other systems such as JTPA, which is currently shifting from a Unisys mainframe system to a PC-based client-server technology.

Rather than developing a statewide system for common intake of all One-Stop customers, the state has encouraged individual Centers in the development of common intake systems. Barriers to the development of a common intake form, according to MIS respondents, revolve around agency concerns about “who owns the data.” Various state agencies also have concerns about client confidentiality and allowing access to data stored in the mainframes. Agreements will have to be reached on what data is “proprietary.” (UI for example, does not routinely share information on customer change of addresses with other agencies.)

The major struggle for MIS developers is that they are often faced with expectations that exceed their capacity to develop systems. In addition, specifications for management information systems often have unrealistic price tags given current levels of funding. The major task for MIS developers is to establish what types of information should be considered “basic” across One-Stop programs, and what types of data constitute “enhancements.” Because there has been a very rapid evolution over the last five years, starting with reorganization of the Connecticut Department of Labor in 1991, it has been difficult to keep up with changing needs. The challenge is to maintain a focus on the basic information needed.



## **Marketing**

Although a marketing committee was established in mid-1994, state-level marketing plans were not yet formalized at the time of the evaluation site visit. Because the transition to a One-Stop system has not yet been completed, state planners have been hesitant to create customer expectations by publicizing the system. To date, marketing accomplishments include the creation of a name—*Connecticut Works*—and logo for the state's One-Stop system. Selecting a name for the system was a much larger challenge than had been expected. Since One-Stop Centers rely on a variety of sources of funding, some local areas initially expressed reservations about losing their identity or being “taken over” by a new system.

At the time of the time visit, however, some local areas were pressing the state for assistance marketing their local Centers because they believed that their One-Stop systems were ready to be publicized. As a result, marketing has been identified as a major priority for the One-Stop system during third-year implementation in 1997.

## **IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS**

During the One-Stop planning phase, Connecticut's goal was to certify fourteen of nineteen existing Job Centers as One-Stop Career Centers during the first year of implementation in 1995. As a result of implementation delays, only two Centers were certified as One-Stop centers during this first year. At the time of the site visit, seven *Connecticut Works* Centers had opened, and the remaining twelve Job Centers were scheduled to be certified as One-Stops during 1997.

Implementation delays occurred for several reasons including (1) the inability to achieve a timely convergence of lease, construction, information technology, and training requirements that had been established as prerequisites for certification; and (2) the change in state government executive leadership which resulted in a new round of state-level discussions about the goals of One-Stops, and in some cases, the re-negotiation of state partnership agreements. Another element that delayed implementation was the need to retrain center staff so that consistent information would be provided to individuals on areas such as UI and job search assistance. State planners also wanted to ensure that the information technology infrastructure in each Center was adequate to support later technological developments.

## **INFLUENCES ON STATE DESIGN AND LESSONS LEARNED**

The 1990s have brought substantial reforms to Connecticut's workforce development system in the form of a reorganization of Connecticut's Labor Department and a recognition that regional boards should play a greater role in the development of workforce development plans and policies, in partnership with the state. The first priority of the *Connecticut Works* system has been to solidify the collaboration of Regional Workforce Development Boards and the Connecticut Department of Labor, building on the process that began with the creation of Transition Centers for dislocated workers. Beyond this core partnership, innovative partnerships have been forged with a number of state partners including the Departments of Education and Higher Education, the Department of Economic and Community Development, and the State Library. However, the absence of a formal agreement with the Department of Social Services for the integration of welfare-to-work services at One-Stop centers is a source of concern, in light of state and federal welfare reform legislation.

Connecticut has shown leadership in areas such as staff development and performance measurement. The Staff Development Unit has established priorities for the capacity building needs associated with the One-Stops initiative and has successfully coordinated its activities with those of other One-Stop system building efforts. The Performance Measurement Unit has established a core set of performance measures for *Connecticut Works* Centers and has helped to train staff at local Centers in the use of these measures. Through collaboration with the Staff Development Unit, an emphasis has been placed on ensuring that local area staff understand the relevance of performance measures and can use them in a way that promotes continuous improvement of services.

The state has, however, experienced a number of barriers that interfered with its original timeline for a rapid adoption of One-Stops statewide. These barriers have included difficulty coordinating schedules for the construction, renovation, and technological improvement of facilities. Finally, although many local areas have been successful in integrating funding streams and service delivery arrangements, others are still working through the process of team-building and negotiating roles for partner staff.